WILLIAM 14

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COUNTRY

Free Territory of Trieste

DATE DISTR. 27 JUL 50

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SUBJECT

Italian Policy Toward Yugoslavs in Trieste

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

- The repeated violation of Italian citizenship laws in the Free Territory of Trieste involving citizens of Slovene origin was the subject of a protest by lawyer Franc Vesel, representing Slovene interests in Trieste. Vesel made the protest to DeZadro, head of the Trieste City Records Office.
- 2. The text of the protest follows:

"All Slovenes and Croats who, after the advent of Fascism, were obliged to emigrate and who now, after the fall of Fascism, have returned to their homes in the free Territory of Trieste, have the right, according to Italian law, to reacquire Italian citizenship. This right has been denied the Slovenes by local Italian authorities. Consequently, persons of Slovene origin returning to their homes in the Free Territory of Trieste are not in a position to obtain passports, work cards (which permit a person to seek employment) and other privileges granted only to Italian citizens. Today, these reorle find themselves in the same category as the refugees from a Communist country. The right to reacquire Italian citizenship, however, is not denied to persons of Italian origin."

- 3. De Radro admitted the injustice of the discrimination against Clovenes and Croats in the ree ferritory of Trieste. However, he stated that he could do nothing because orders came to him from the Zone Presidnet Pr. Falutan, the Mayor of Arieste Partoli, the head of the Italian mission Castellani, and the assessor of the "emo-Christian Farty Sinal Mini, who claim that they are under tacit instructions from Minister Scelba in Rome.
- 4. Part of the conversation that took place between Vesel and De Zadro is quoted herewith:

De Zadro: I agree that the above is an injustice to the clovenes but the

orders of my superiors are such that I can do nothing about it. As things now stand, these reorde are unable to reacquire

Italian citizenship.

Vesel:

That do you intend to do with those Slovenes who are not permitted

to enjoy their rights under Italian Law?

De Zadro: They will beco and leave the Territory.

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-2-

Vesel:

But you realize that this is absurd; it means that a person born in Trieste or the immediate vicinity, who owns a home and proper'y here, can be expelled from his native land.

De Zadro: I do not know what to reply.

Vesel:

You know that I am a great friend of the Italians and my friendshir for them was demonstrated in 1943 when, for having defended Italians in Umago, I was nearly killed. The same thing happened when I defended Italians in Fostumia in 1946. Therefore, I beg you to inform your superiors that nothing could be worse for the Italian cause in Trieste than the action they now are taking. If the Italian Covernment and Italian authorities persist in this discrimination against Slovene citizens of the Free Territory of Trieste, we are ready once again to fill the prisons and fight to the utmost against them. Furthermore, those rersons who are the proponents of these racial laws will be denounced for treason

once the Free Territory is fully constituted.

De Zadro: I do not wish to enter into a political discussion but I repeat once again that those are orders from Rome and Pome's local rerresentatives.

5. Following this conversation, some 12 Slovene and Croat lawyers met at the Dreher Prewery and formed a committee to examine the individual cases of Slovenes who have been denied citizenshi;, in order to bring the cases to the attention of the allied authorities. During the course of the meeting, a statement was made to the effect that proof had been obtained that the Italians currently are requesting citizens who were abroad in 1940 to produce documents proving they never requested citizenship of another state. Once established in this category, they are being prosecuted for not having reported for Italian military service in 1941 and 1942.